

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A photosensitive resin printing plate precursor for letterpress printing comprising, on a support in this order: a photosensitive resin layer (A) containing a water-soluble or water-dispersible resin and an ultraviolet-curable monomer; optionally, an adhesion-adjusting layer (B) containing a water-soluble or water-dispersible resin; a water-insoluble heat-sensitive mask layer (C) containing an infrared-absorbing material, a peel assist layer (D) having a thickness of 0.1 to 6 μm , and a protective layer (E), wherein the absence of the adhesion-adjusting layer (B), the water insoluble heat-sensitive mask layer (C) is formed in contact with the photosensitive resin layer (A), and in the presence of the adhesion-adjusting layer (B), the water-insoluble heat-sensitive mask layer (C) is formed in contact with the adhesion adjusting layer (B).

2. (Currently Amended) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 1, wherein the water-insoluble heat-sensitive mask layer (C) contains ~~with~~ [[is]] crosslinked ~~with~~ a curable resin.

3. (Original) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 2, wherein the curable resin is a combination of: at least one compound selected from the group consisting of multifunctional isocyanates and multifunctional epoxy compounds; and at least one compound selected from the group consisting of urea-based resins, amine-based compounds, amide-based compounds, hydroxyl group-containing compounds, carboxylic compounds, and thiol-based compounds.

4. (Original) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 1, wherein the water-insoluble heat-sensitive mask layer (C) is a metal thin film.

5. (Original) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 1, further comprising an adhesion-adjusting layer (B) between the photosensitive resin layer (A) and the heat-sensitive mask layer (C).

6. (Original) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 5, wherein the adhesion-adjusting layer (B) contains a water-soluble or a water-dispersible resin.

7. (Original) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 1, wherein the photosensitive resin layer (A) contains a polyamide resin.

8. (Original) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 1, wherein the photosensitive resin layer (A) contains polyvinyl alcohol, partially saponified polyvinyl alcohol, or their modified form.

9. (Original) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 1, wherein the heat-sensitive mask layer (C) contains an acrylic resin and no nitrocellulose.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim [[10]] 1, wherein the peel assist layer (D) contains an infrared-absorbing material and/or a pyrolyzable compound.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a photosensitive resin printing plate precursor, the method comprising the steps of:

(i) forming a photosensitive resin sheet by depositing a photosensitive resin layer (A) on a substrate;

(ii) forming a heat-sensitive mask element including a water-insoluble heat-sensitive mask layer (C), a protective layer (E) and a peel assist layer (D) having a thickness of 0.1 to 6 μm disposed between the protective layer (E) and the heat-sensitive mask layer (C); and

(iii) laminating the surface of the photosensitive resin layer (A) of the photosensitive resin sheet to the heat-sensitive mask layer (C) of the heat-sensitive mask element.

13.-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Original) The method for producing the photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 12, wherein the heat-sensitive mask element includes the heat-sensitive mask layer (C) and an adhesion-adjusting layer (B), and the lamination is performed such that the adhesion-adjusting layer (B) of the heat-sensitive mask element comes into contact with the surface of the photosensitive resin layer (A).

16. (Original) The method for producing the photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 12, wherein, in the step of forming the heat-sensitive mask element, the heat-sensitive mask layer (C) is deposited while being heated, thereby forming a crosslinked structure therein.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a letterpress printing plate comprising:

(1) preparing a photosensitive resin printing plate precursor comprising, on a support in this order: a photosensitive resin layer (A) containing a water-soluble or water-dispersible resin and an ultraviolet-curable monomer; a water-insoluble heat-sensitive mask layer (C) containing an

infrared-absorbing material; ~~a protective layer (E), or a peel assist layer (D)~~ having a thickness of 0.1 to 6 μm and a protective layer (E);

(2) forming an image mask (C') by imagewise irradiating the heat-sensitive mask layer (C) with infrared laser light;

(3) exposing through the image mask (C') to ultraviolet light to form a latent image on the photosensitive resin layer (A); and

(4) removing the image mask (C') and portions unexposed to ultraviolet light of the photosensitive resin layer (A) by development with a water-based liquid,

wherein at least part of the protective layer (E) is peeled before the heat-sensitive mask layer (C) is imagewise irradiated with infrared laser light.

19. (New) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 1, wherein the peel assist layer (D) remains on the heat-sensitive mask layer side after peeling off the protective layer (E).

20. (New) The photosensitive resin printing plate precursor according to Claim 1, wherein the photosensitive resin layer (A) contains a water-soluble or water-dispersible resin and ultraviolet-curable monomer, without elastmeric binder.